

CITY-COUNTY COMMON

County-City Building • 555 S. 10th Street • Lincoln, NE 68508

County Commissioners
(402) 441-7447

Mayor
(402) 441-7511

City Council
(402) 441-7515

COMMON AGENDA MONDAY, AUGUST 4, 2003 8:30 a.m. - Or Immediately Following Joint LPS/City/County Meeting Conference Room 113

I. MINUTES

8:30 a.m. A. None

II. PRESENTATIONS

8:30 a.m. A. Joint Position Discussion/Update (15 Min) K.Eagan

8:45 a.m. B. Employee Paid Parking Discussion (15 Min)

9:00 a.m. C. Jointly Funded Agencies - Discussion (15 Min)

9:15 a.m. D. Emergency Management Position - K.Eagan/D.Ahlberg -
(15 Min)

III ADJOURNMENT - Approx. 9:30 a.m.

Common080403

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COMMON MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 4, 2003

8:30 a.m.

County/City Building - Room 113

COUNCIL MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ken Svoboda, Common Chair, Jon Camp, Glenn Friendt, Annette McRoy, Patte Newman, Terry Werner; *COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:* Jonathan Cook, *MAYOR SENG:* In Attendance.

COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ray Stevens, Common Vice-Chair; Deb Schorr; Bob Workman; *COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:* Bernie Heier, Larry Hudkins

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Bonnie Coffey, Director of the Women's Commission Georgia Glass, Personnel Director; Allan Abbott, Public Works Director; Steve Hubka, Budget Officer; Corri Keilty, Mayor's Office; Bruce Dart, Health Director; June Remington, Aging Director; Bruce Bohrer, Chamber of Commerce; Cori Beattie, Kerry Eagan, County Board; Joan Ray, Council Secretary; Darrell Podany, Aide to Council Members Camp, Friendt and Svoboda; Julie Haith, Keat O'Hearn, City Council Interns

1. MINUTES

(1) None

THIS MEETING WAS SCHEDULED TO ADDRESS:

JOINT POSITION - DISCUSSION/UPDATE
EMPLOYEE PAID PARKING
JOINTLY FUNDED AGENCIES - FUNDING
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POSITION

The audio equipment did not successfully record this meeting. These minutes will, therefore, be less detailed than is the norm.

JOINT POSITION - DISCUSSION/UPDATE - Mr. Kerry Eagan made the presentation. Mr. Eagan noted that he had been approached with a concern regarding the position description not being broad enough to cover some of the duties that had been contemplated when those duties were first being drafted. Mr. Eagan noted that he had revised the position description to address some of those concerns. The position classification (Excluded Clerk/Typist II) was broad enough to cover all of the responsibilities which had to be covered in the office. In the original draft, there was a provision that the person would staff the Common Meetings. After discussion with other persons in the County Board Office, however, it had been determined

that it wasn't appropriate to write up the job description in that way - because, first of all, the position is one of "receptionist". You wouldn't want to send the receptionist off to handle duties and have a higher rated person move in to assume the receptionist duties in that person's absence. We leave in the job description that the position would assist with the preparation of the Common meetings, such as the room reservations, and coordinating the mailing; but it was not intended that this person would leave his/her post and staff the Common meetings. You want good minutes and you want one of your better persons doing those duties. But, the holder of the joint position would be available to help with transcriptions, too.

Another addition to the original draft was wording that would allow the position to back up County & City Staff while not requiring out-of-class pay.

The position was originally opened to County personnel only (as it is a County position). There were no takers, so the position was also opened to City employees and to the public as well. Ms. McRoy noted that the title "Clerk-Typist II" seemed archaic. She felt that with the complexity of the work involved, she had envisioned the position as an Administrative Assistant. She observed that the duties of support staff have become more complex with the increase of technology in the work place. Mr. Eagan explained that the budget and classification system dictated the job title and the classification.

The scheduled work hours (suggested to be flexible to better accommodate the position, and access to the joint offices) were discussed briefly. Kerry Eagan noted that the target date for filling the position would be October 1st. The interviews would be set up with participation by County Board and Council. It was noted that the Multicultural Advisory Committee would encourage that affirmative action be a part of the interviewing process with minorities being included in the selected group of nominees.

EMPLOYEE PAID PARKING - Mr. Ray Stevens noted that at a previous common meeting, someone had stated that it had been decided to delay this decision. He was not aware that a decision to delay had been made. He thought, perhaps, no action is equivalent to a delay. He noted that employee parking is an additional benefit that should be paid for by the employee. With the building of the new parking garage, this is an opportune time to present a proposal to the PBC and set guidelines on who would be eligible for parking in that facility and in the protected area beneath this building. There are union negotiation considerations to be taken into account, but any employees utilizing these facilities should pay a fee for doing so. He felt those who currently hold privileged parking spaces that have not been required to pay could be grand-fathered into this equation. However, as they leave through attrition, the new employees would be included under the fee schedule. He noted that all elected public officials should be included in this paid parking program. Mr. Stevens noted that the reason he had brought this matter before the Common was because both the City Council and the County Board would eventually have to approve the policy and this was a good venue for garnering support.

He noted, in response to Mr. Workman's comment regarding the Public Building Commissions Parking Committee having a well conceived plan regarding the parking facilities, that the PBC will be including a sur-charge based on the square footage rental of each department and he did not feel this was a cost that should be borne by the taxpayers of Lincoln and Lancaster County.

Discussion continued with comments regarding the availability of free parking at more remote locations while the new facility and covered parking should be a benefit paid for by the employee. It was noted that the State charges for all parking for all State employees in the downtown area around the Capitol, except for the elected officials.

Mr. Camp stated that he could speak either way on the issue of paid parking for elected officials, noting that City Council Members do not have the benefits that other employees receive. Mr. Werner felt charging for parking might encourage the use of public transportation. He also thought that, because of security and safety requirements, especially in the case of judges, it might be inappropriate to require those officials to pay for parking.

Mr. Werner asked Mr. Stevens if he was proposing that the \$1.00 per square foot sur-charge be dropped by PBC on rental charges, if the employees were to pay for parking privileges. Mr. Stevens answered that, in effect, that could be done, because the employees would be paying an equivalent amount.

Mr. Steve Hubka explained that the [parking] bonds would be paid from two pieces of funding. One is the \$1.00 per square foot sur-charge on rent and the other is the \$30.00 per month per stall charge for employees who will be parking beneath this building or across the street. The latter amount has been figured into the City Budget for the upcoming fiscal year. He did not believe that the employees paying \$30.00 per month would alleviate the need for the sur-charge on the rent. It would alleviate the need for that money as it is currently in the City Budget. Mr. Hubka did not know how the County was handling their \$30.00 per stall payments.

Mr. Friendt offered clarification that employees are not paying the \$30.00 per month at this time, but the payment is made by each Department through the budget. If the employees were to pay, that amount would be removed from the budget and the taxpayers would not be paying for the parking. Mr. Hubka agreed that, if that were accomplished within the next few weeks, that expense could be removed from the Budget.

Ms. Schorr stated that whatever plan was adopted, it should be an all-inclusive, comprehensive plan that would include both the covered parking beneath this building and the parking in the new facility. Mr. Werner noted that whatever plan it adopted, it would be brought forward in next year's budget.

The issue of a City-wide policy that was the same for all employees was discussed with the note that the policy should be uniform throughout the City and County Agencies. The final thought on the subject was that the Public Building Commission's Parking Committee work out an equitable, comprehensive parking policy that would take into consideration such things as handicap access for certain employees, the pro-rating of charges to elected officials on the basis of time actually utilized in the facilities, and no charge for those citizens working on City/County Commissions and Task Forces who are volunteering their time in the service of the community - (it was noted that the Parking Committee has addressed this particular concern with a gate pass for these individuals). Also to be included for consideration should be union negotiations in the upcoming fiscal year; and the option of tiered charges, from free for outlying lots, increasing on a sliding fee scale based on proximity to the building. Once such a plan is detailed and defined, it would be brought before the Common for evaluation and approval.

JOINTLY FUNDED AGENCIES - FUNDING - Mr. Bob Workman, who had requested this issue for discussion, explained that the County Board had, by a 3-2 vote preliminarily approved the next tax assessment. He noted that the increase would be 14% on the property tax assessment over the previous year. The Board was split, some favoring the increase, some not.

He noted that their only options [for cost savings] at this time were looking at the unmandated programs. He stated that they had had a list of these for over a year. He had mentioned at the last Common meeting that one of the unmandated programs that could be eliminated, under the tax/budget concerns, was the Womens Commission. He stated that he wanted to thank Bonnie Coffey for being here, noting that he had heard nothing but positive comments regarding her performance while heading the Commission. He noted that it was simply a time to look at their budget options and decide what they could and could not afford to continue to support. He felt the County Board was in that position and that they must look at what they can and cannot afford. We must look at our priorities. He noted that another program on the unmandated list was Mental Health Office (20% funding). He felt the Womens' Commission would be well served if they were turned into a non-profit organization 5013C and compete with all of the other agencies that require public funding through the JBC. He felt they've done a good job, but we can't afford everything that is on our plate right now. He was looking for ways to cut programs rather than initiate across the board cuts. If we don't prioritize, our property tax will be up 14% over last year.

He noted that the County, unlike the City, has only one major source of funds and that is the property tax. Quite honestly, there has not been one vote of support for this idea. He wanted to get the Council's opinion on this issue. He noted that the Women's Commission provides a service, but he is trying to work on a priority list on these services with ways to cut the budget.

Mr. Werner asked, if the Women's Commission were cut, what savings would that entail? Mr. Workman noted that on both sides it would be a savings of approximately \$92,000.00 - the total for the City and County is \$186,000. Mr. Werner asked how much the rate increase would be if it were cut. Mr. Workman noted that it would probably not even be a blip on the radar screen...but where do you start? This is the only place I could think of to make a cut. It is \$186,000 between the two entities. It would not solve our problems, and we would have to continue to look at unmandated services in other areas. But, Mr. Workman felt it would best serve the constituents of this community if this were a non-profit entity rather than a public funded agency.

Mr. Werner asked about other funding possibilities [for the County] other than the property tax, but Mr. Eagan noted that, though there were some fees, the primary revenue source is the property tax. Mr. Werner stated that he would never support this motion. He felt, besides the symbolic impact of the Commission, it served an important function in this community.

Mr. Friendt asked for a list of the other unmandated groups being reviewed. He felt [cutting] the small amount being considered doesn't make sense. Mr. Workman stated that the only other agency unmandated that is jointly funded would be the Mental Health Office. Mr. Friendt noted that the Budget Committee is not mandated. He added that every JBC agency could be asked to give up taxpayer funding under this scenario.

Mr. Camp stated that we're looking at needs...but we're getting to a point where we need to prioritize ahead of the curve rather than behind the curve. It is important to have that mental attitude. We will have to prioritize. Mr. Camp asked if there was a possibility of phasing on the cutback. The Women's Foundation is an important entity for Lincoln's service programing. Could the funding be phased out over several years and give the Community an opportunity to self-prioritize.

Mr. Stevens stated that the inheritance tax is one area that could be increased - perhaps folks could pre-pay [Laughter]. The Court-appointed special advocates (volunteers who assist the court system helping family & youth in conflict with the law), is an unmandated program that costs \$30,000 which goes to the training of these volunteers. Another area of Community Alternatives is Community Corrections - \$400,000 has been budgeted to that program for this year. This program is preventative and will reduce the jail population. We have \$80,000 in the Keno Prevention fund. So, by and large, there are a number of unmandated programs that we're *adding*.

Ms. Schorr stated that she would like to take the next year to look at supplemental funding for the Women's Commission and maintain the vital service to the community without its being solely funded by tax dollars.

Ms. Bonnie Coffey came forward to address some concerns. She noted that should the Common chose to have the Women's Commission become a 501C3 agency, it would not be a Commission. The definition of "Commission" is that they are placed within government so that they can impact legislation more effectively. Mr. Workman observed that the budget for the Women's Commission is up 6.8% over last years budget. Ms. Coffey noted that there have been no personnel increases during her tenure.

Mr. Workman stated that the increased unmandated additions referenced by Mr. Stevens was a very necessary part of the County Budget.

Ms. Newman stated that she felt the cutting of funding to the Women's Commission would be a big mistake. She understood Mr. Workman's reasoning, but he himself had stated that this would make very little impact on the 14% tax increase. As one of the majority members of society (51%) , she did not understand how he could justify this when we have minority representation on many, many boards.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POSITION - Mr. Eagan came forward on behalf of Mr. Doug Ahlberg, who was apparently not notified of the meeting and had a previous commitment. He thought the County Board had requested this. Mr. Ahlberg did have a position in mind which would best benefit Emergency Management - an Administrative Aide, or Deputy Director situation to be added to his budget. He needed someone to do daily tasks such as payment vouchers, administering the office processes, to assist with grants management and paper/computer oriented tasks. This is what he felt he needed most. It would have an impact to the City of approximately \$15,000 when grants were taken into consideration. Doug felt this would assist his back-up to have someone who knows emergency procedures. He didn't feel he needed another back-up, but a Staff person.

Mr. Workman noted that this was a part of the motion he'd made when he made the motion to eliminate the Women's Commission - to add this extra funding. He explained that Mr. Ahlberg, since 9/11, has really had a different responsibility to the Community. He not only runs the County Emergency office, but runs several State programs. The County gets reimbursed for that, but we are understaffed in that area. Mr. Workman noted that Mr. Ahlberg could definitely use the extra help and this is something that we need.

Discussion continued with input regarding the Emergency Management office, its functions, level of preparedness, the security of the community, succession management, as well as funding.

After offering support for Mr. Ahlberg, Ms. McRoy moved to hire an Administrative Aide this year with a Deputy Director scheduled for the following budget year. Mr. Friendt, noting that this discussion had helped clarify the situation, seconded the motion. It was determined that this would be a budget issue that would be addressed in the individual budgets of the separate bodies.

Mr. Svoboda noted that the addition of these positions would help better serve the needs of the community.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS - Mr. Camp mentioned the Council's Intern program, recently initiated, and asked the two interns in attendance to introduce themselves. (Ms. Julie Haith of Southwest High School and Keat O'Hearn of Pius X introduced themselves to the Common Members)

The date for the next Common meeting was set for September 2nd, 2003.

ADJOURNMENT - Mr. Svoboda called for adjournment. The motion was made, seconded and the meeting was declared adjourned by unanimous consensus at approximately 10:00 a.m.

Submitted by
Joan V. Ray
Council Secretary

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